

TIP...continued

Comments received on the TIP are summarized and included in the document. After formal MPO adoption, the TIP's from Georgia's MPO's are forwarded to the Governor for his approval. Once approval has been received, the TIPs are incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Establishment of the MPOs is a result of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962. This Act required urbanized areas of over 50,000 in population to have a cooperative, comprehensive and continuing transportation planning process in order to qualify for Federal funding used for maintenance, safety and improvement of existing transportation facilities and public transportation systems.

MPOs are designated by the Governor to receive Federal transportation planning funds. In addition to completing the TIP, they are also responsible for coordinating the transportation planning process within their urban area, including working with their planning partners in the federal, state, and local governments.

Within Georgia, there are currently 11 designated MPO's: Albany, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Brunswick, Chattanooga, Columbus, Macon, Rome, Savannah and Warner Robins.

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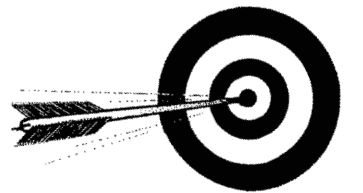
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Listening to the People's Needs... Shaping of GDOT's Public Involvement Plan and Policy

Public involvement is key to everything we do. It's good business as well as a federal and state requirement. Today, more than ever, citizens are involved and participating in all aspects of government. This high level of participation and partnership ensures successful planning of transportation projects and programs that affect very diverse communities. No doubt, planning for transportation has and will continue to benefit from this interest.

GDOT realizes how important this issue is. On February 15, 2001, the State Transportation Board formally approved GDOT's Public Involvement Plan (PIP) and adopted the Public Involvement Policy. On March 1, 2001, GDOT officially began using the PIP and Policy.

The PIP represents the nuts and bolts of how we will achieve our purpose - the Policy sets the purpose. The PIP ensures and encourages participation from the general public, especially Environmental Justice (minority, disabled, elderly and low-income) communities, in the transportation decision making process. It also fosters improved two-way communication between the Georgia DOT and its customers; focuses on developing better products and services that improve mobility, and brings us closer to the public's vision of ideal

transportation in the state. The Policy outlines the goals for our outreach effort - the PIP details the roles and responsibilities of each office.

Developed through a collaborative effort among the Offices of Planning, Communications, Maintenance, Urban and Road Design, Environment and Location offices, and all seven Georgia DOT field districts, the PIP and Policy seek to streamline the department's public involvement process. Prior to adoption, both documents were distributed statewide-in all County Public Libraries; on Georgia DOT's web site; through legal and classified advertisements placed in major newspapers across the state and through press releases sent out statewide. Many of the public's comments and suggestions received were incorporated into the PIP and Policy.

Public involvement is not new to us at Georgia DOT. The PIP and Policy build on other public involvement and outreach that remain part of our experience and history. We encourage you to view the PIP and Policy that is available on the internet at: www.dot.state.ga.us/publicinv/pubinvplan-policy.html.

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Northern Sub-Area Study & SR 400 Corridor Analysis

Serving the transportation needs of a metropolitan area is a challenge, especially when the area is rapidly growing and developing. This is especially true of the northern portion of metro Atlanta where development and population growth continues at a rapid pace. In order to address these issues, the Office of Planning is coordinating with the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) in a new planning study of this area known as the Northern Sub-Area Study and State Route 400 Corridor Analysis.

Most recently, GDOT has been working with GRTA, the contract manager for the study, as well as other groups partnered in the project such as Atlanta Regional Commission, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority and other

stakeholders to select a consultant to conduct this important planning study.

Geographically, the study will include the State Route 400 Corridor as well as the Northern Sub-Area that includes portions of DeKalb, Cherokee, Cobb, Forsyth, Fulton, and Gwinnett Counties.

This study will comprehensively evaluate transportation, land use and air quality issues in the northern metro Atlanta region. The results of the study will include:

§ Identification of short- and long-term transportation needs

§ Recommendations for land use strategies and transportation decision-making

§ Information and data for use by local governments and ARC in future updates

to the Atlanta Regional Transportation Plan.

The study will include establishment of a steering committee to help guide the development of the study. The committee will include members from GDOT, GRTA, ARC, MARTA, the Federal Highway Administration, affected local governments and others.

Additionally, the study will have an extensive public involvement program that will bring together the affected communities and gather input from interested citizens. Efforts to include minority, disabled, elderly and low-income communities will be an important element of the study's public outreach.

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Transportation Enhancement News

New Projects Announced
The Office of Planning is pleased to announce that the Transportation Enhancement (TE) program has recently awarded funding to many exciting projects throughout the state. In this latest round, 135 TE projects were chosen to receive funding during the fiscal years 2002-2003. Typical TE projects provide transportation-related amenities to communities in the form of landscaping/streetscaping, construction of multi-use trails/greenways, sidewalks, or rehabilitation of historic transportation structures.

Just as in previous rounds, the Office of Planning received numerous applications seeking federal funding through this popular program. In all, a total of 255 eligible applications requesting a total of \$158 million in federal funds were received. Competition was tight -- almost \$50 million in federal funds was available for new projects.

To aid in reviewing the applications and selecting projects, GDOT completed an extensive in-house technical examination of all applications prior to their review by the Transportation Enhancement Advisory Panel. Originally formed in 1992, the Advisory Panel consists of professionals from outside of GDOT who bring expertise in the various TE project categories to review, comment, and assist in evaluating each application. The Advisory Panel's work concluded with a list of projects recommended for funding that was then forwarded to the State Transportation Board for final project selection.

In this latest round, projects from many TE categories were selected for funding (see chart at top right).

To help sponsors develop their newly awarded TE projects, the Office of Planning recently completed a series of workshops on the TE project development process. Held at six locations throughout Georgia, the workshop provided training for consultants, local governments, and individuals responsible for developing and implementing TE projects.

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Category of Projects		Federal Funds	% of Funds
Selected for Funding	# of Projects	Awarded	Available
Streetscapes/Landscaping	60	\$23,746,776	47.19
Multi-use Trails/Greenways	35	\$15,375,200	30.55
Sidewalks	16	\$4,852,936	9.64
Rehabilitate Depots/Bldgs.	15	\$4,121,950	8.19
Acquire Scenic Properties	4	\$1,195,264	2.38
Planning Studies	4	\$629,200	1.25
Miscellaneous	1	\$400,000	0.81
TOTAL	135	\$50,321,326	100.00

The full list of the FY 2003-2003 TE project selections is available on the internet at www.dot.state.ga.us/homeoffs/planning/www/planning/planhome.htm



A completed TE project in Woodbine features landscaping, lighting and bicycle/pedestrian paths.



The Woodbine project, located in Camden County, also includes a riverwalk and partially covered fishing pier built on abandoned railroad trestle.

Series of Five Interchange Studies Completed

The Office of Planning has recently completed a series of studies of five potential new interstate interchanges on I-20, I-85 and I-95. Working through the consultant firm PBS&J, the five studies were completed to assist GDOT in determining the feasibility of further developing new interchange projects.

Three of the proposed interchanges are on I-95: at Horse Stamp Church Rd in Camden County, Retreat Road in Liberty County, and Belfast Siding Road in Bryan County. The other proposed interchanges are on I-85 in Meriwether County (between US 29 & State Route 54) and on I-20 in Columbia County (at Old Louisville Road).

Initiated at the request of local governments, the studies analyzed the feasibility and need for the new interchanges. Elements of each study included determining the boundary of the study area; compiling data on the existing land use, development, and traffic volumes; identifying the existing and projected traffic network within the study area; and analyzing current and projected land use, development, and travel patterns.

The studies conclude that if projected land use and development does not occur near the proposed interchanges as expected, obtaining the required approval from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for a new interchange is not probable. If development does occur as predicted in the study, obtaining FHWA's approval is much more likely. In this case, as development occurs the local government would be responsible for pursuing the necessary steps to assist GDOT in acquiring FHWA's approval.



The Office of Planning has completed studies on five interstate interchanges.

Changes for Interchange Studies in the Office of Planning

As a result of the increasing numbers of requests from local governments to study new interchanges, the Office of Planning has developed guidelines for studying proposed interchange projects. These guidelines set minimum feasibility requirements for all new interchange requests before pursuing a study for a new interchange.

Under the new guidelines, when a local government requests a new interchange project that they feel is justifiable, they will be required to submit the data and information demonstrating the need, as well as a feasibility analysis supporting their request. When received, the Office of Planning will review the submission and make a decision on the feasibility of a new interchange project.

If a new interchange is deemed to be needed and feasible by the Office of Planning, the next step involves the local government funding the cost of a GDOT-procured consultant to develop the federally-required Interchange Justification Report (IJR). When complete, the Office of Planning will submit the IJR to FHWA, who will make a final decision on allowing a new interchange on the interstate highway system.

Implementing these guidelines will assist GDOT and local governments in identifying the need for new interchanges. With the help of local governments submitting supporting data and analysis together with a request for a new interchange, the Office of Planning will be able to complete its review and provide a more timely response.

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MPOs, With Planning's Help, Updating TIPs

The Office of Planning has been busy assisting Georgia's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in updating Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The TIP, which includes programmed road and transit projects in an urban area over a three-year period, is updated annually. As per Federal regulations, the TIP must be fiscally balanced so that only those projects that have funding, or a reasonable expectation of obtaining funding during those three years, may be included

in the TIP. The TIP process resulted from subsequent transportation legislation after the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1962. The TIP forms the critical link between planning for transportation needs in an urban area and providing for those needs. Review of the TIP occurs at many levels including the MPO's committees and public involvement process.

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